1: Handy E-5 (1920-1921)1923 OX6 Marquesas OX6

flamboyant tree (*kenae, Erythrina indica*) was in flower, and to have been an hereditary affliction. 158

A modern Nuku Hiva informant told me of persons who run wild (*koea* or *horai*) sometimes going into desert regions to live.

TREATMENT OF DISEASE

Divination of the Cause of Sickness

Practitioners who were called upon to divine the cause of sickness and the like through possession were called, in general, *tau'a*. Those who made the god or spirit enter into their bodies through their mouths, so that they might prophesy and answer questions regarding sickness and death, were specifically called *pae'a*. These appear usually, if not always, to have been women. Their practice was spoken of as *ha'a topa te etua*, to cause the god to fall, or *ha'a u'u te etua*, to make the god enter. Dordillon's dictionary (8) gives *tihoka* as the term for the descent of a god into the body of a person. 756 ● 781

On Hiva Oa the practice of a *pae'a* was described as follows: If someone were ill, a woman whose profession it was to divine the cause of sickness would be sent for. She would come and spend the night at the house of the sick person, or the sick person would be taken to a dark place outside the sleeping house. When the *pae'a* went through her experience of possession, there was always a large crowd of people looking on. The *pae'a* would open her mouth very wide and the god would enter her stomach through it. She would then speak in a whining voice, which was supposed to be that of the god, telling the cause of sickness and the probability of recovery. 755 787

Père Pierre (4) says that such practitioners worked only at night, in order that the *tau'a* might better hide the jugglery connected with his practice. After a piece of cloth had been laid out in the house of the sick person and the lights were put out, the practitioner (*tau'a*) would draw himself up to the rafters of the house, and stirring the thatch to make a rustling, would make a noise with his lips. These sounds were supposed to be made by the god. He would then let himself fall with a thud upon the cloth that had been spread out—the sound of his landing was thought to mark the descent of the god. In his natural voice, the *tau'a* would then ask, "Who are you?" In a false voice, he would reply, "I am N——," giving the name of some deity. Assuming again his natural voice, he would ask why the patient was sick, and a reply would come in a false voice. This, according to Père Pierre, was called *etua ha'a topa*, meaning, to cause the god to descend for consultation. It is not certain in my mind whether this is a description of the same practice as that given above,

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261 theft; members of the same family would steal food from one another, but nothing else. The high value placed on food was clearly shown in social observances. Every form of social advancement was linked with some ceremony involving a feast. The natives took delight and pride in the amount of food produced at these feasts, sheer bulk being more important than the delicacy of cooking or preparation. Taboos would be placed on perhaps two of the staple foods, so that no one could eat them for months, and there would be a great accumulation by the time the taboo was removed for the feast. The family would starve themselves for weeks in order to fatten the pigs for the event. Even tribal wars were suspended when a feast was imminent. Neighboring tribes would be formally invited to join the festivities. An enemy never attacked if he knew a feast was [721] in preparation. After the feast, however, when all were beginning to suffer from indigestion, fights were very likely to flare up, and the visiting tribe often had to run for home.

753 774 The Marquesans had the belief, common to many primitive peoples, that certain types of illness were caused by the absence of the soul. Their method of restoring the lost soul was another testimonial to the importance of food in this culture. The [756] *tuhunga* (medicine man) built a small house, in front of which he placed food saying, "Soul, this is for you." The soul, unable to resist the lure of food, returned to the house and was snatched by the waiting *tuhunga* and returned to its proper place. He usually had many scratches to show for his struggle with the lost soul.

32 There was plenty of timber and bamboo on the islands, but stone suitable for implements was irregularly distributed. The Marquesans' material culture was extremely rich, perhaps the richest in the Polynesian area, characterized by a tremendous amount of decoration and elaboration of detail. A primitive craftsman, carpenter, or canoe maker would have half a dozen adzes, each for a special use. A tattooer would have in his kit [304] ten or fifteen bone combs of different sizes for making various designs,

/94 cont./.
ultimately produce a sexually pleasing adolescent girl. The use of cosmetics also appears to be a surviving remnant of an aboriginal girl's ceremony of which relatively little is known today. This lacuna in Marquesan ethnography is largely due to missionary efforts which were concentrated on stamping out all of the more outstanding and orgiastic ceremonies in the Marquesan native culture. Some information was obtained on ceremonies which were related in some way to puberty from informants on Nuku Hiva, in Hatiheu and Taipivai, two valleys which were formerly united in the historic period, at least, as a single tribe -- the Taipi.

/95/ According to informants, adolescent girls were kept at home and subjected to special treatment with the vaginal cosmetics described above, as well as a preparation for lightening skin color, made from the vine papa. Some tattooing may have been performed on girls of higher rank at this time. When the appropriate time arrived, the girls would be taken to the subtribal ceremonial center (tohua or koika) where they participated in ceremonies in which they exhibited themselves, their tattoo if any and submitted to a genital inspection. For the genital inspection they stood upon flat-topped boulders that were ranged along the sides of the rectangular ceremonial plazas. These boulders were called ke'a vehine po'otu or ke'a vehine haka (beautiful girl stone or dancing girl stone, respectively). These boulders are to be found on nearly every ceremonial plaza on Nuku Hiva. Although it is certain that they served other purposes beside genital inspection alone, this purpose seems to have loomed sufficiently large, hence the name attached.

In the genital inspection, if the labiae and mucus membrane lining of the vulva were pale and the pubic hair pliant and short, the girl was acceptable by Marquesan aesthetic standards. If, however, the labiae and membranes were of a ruddy color, then the girl was subjected to considerable derision, being insulted with the appellation of to'e, pa'a, ke hika -- "clitoris (like a) ripe anona squamosa."